



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Administrative Officer Series

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Additional Available Guidance

See [Digest of Significant Classification Decisions & Opinions, Vol. 7](#) for applicability of series for one-grade and two-grade interval work. See [Digest Vol. 10](#) for guidance on the extent of skills required by administrative officer.

Workforce Compensation and Performance Service
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Administrative Officer Series

GS-0341

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SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions in which the employees are responsible for providing or obtaining a variety of management services essential to the direction and operation of an organization. The paramount qualifications required are extensive knowledge and understanding of management principles, practices, methods and techniques, and skill in integrating management services with the general management of an organization.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Administrative management work is primarily concerned with providing, securing or negotiating for the resources or services needed to manage and run an organization. It involves direct assistance to the "operating" manager -- i.e., the official with the primary responsibility for the direction of an organization or unit established to accomplish a basic goal or mission.

An administrative officer aids the operating manager and subordinate operating officials in getting things done through his knowledge of and skills in dealing with organization, methods, funds, people, equipment, and other tools or resources of management. Ordinarily, he has a responsible role in the management of both financial and human resources because of his immediate relationship to the operating manager. He generally does key work in several other vital functions or services such as management analysis, procurement, contract administration, property management, space management, security administration, reports management, data processing, and similar or closely related activities. (Note: This series covers only work of a two-grade interval nature. See [Digest 7](#).)

Intrinsic to administrative management work is knowledge of the organization served and its mission. Administrative management work requires a very good understanding of all, or nearly all, of the following:

- The objectives of management;
- how the unit or entity served is organized to carry out these objectives;
- the kinds of operating programs, projects and/or tasks that are involved;
- the means for, and problems involved in, obtaining and controlling the financial resources needed;
- the types of positions needed;
- the kinds of training, experience and abilities required by employees;

- the kinds of equipment and material generally used;
- lines and extent of authority within the organization and at higher levels;
- the kinds of practical problems employees encounter in their work; and
- the environmental conditions under which work is performed.

Along with an understanding of these items, administrative management work requires knowledge of the relative importance of various work operations, and of the relative importance of various management services to these operations.

Combined with this understanding and knowledge must be a management sense of what needs to be done, and when to do it. Most importantly, administrative management requires the ability to apply such understanding and knowledge in solving the practical problems of management.

An administrative officer is a generalist. The total management process is his interest, and the proficiency required involves many aspects of management. General management skills are the paramount requirement. Though aspects such as budget administration and personnel management assume major importance in many positions and other aspects such as procurement and property management are also important in many jobs, no single functional, resource or service area forms a basis for the paramount skills. (See [Digest 10](#) for guidance on general management vs. technical skills.)

Administrative officer positions typically include such duties and responsibilities as the following, or comparable duties:

1. Helping management to identify its financial, personnel, and material needs and problems.
2. Developing budget estimates and justifications; making sure that funds are used in accordance with the operating budget.
3. Counseling management in developing and maintaining sound organization structures, improving management methods and procedures, and seeing to the effective use of men, money, and materials.
4. Collaborating with personnel specialists in finding solutions to management problems arising out of changes in work which have an impact on jobs and employees.
5. Advising on and negotiating contracts, agreements, and cooperative arrangements with other government agencies, universities, or private organizations.

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Administrative officer positions are mainly of two broad types. One type is the chief of a central administrative unit which provides services to a number of operating divisions, field offices, or other units each headed by an operating manager. The central administrative unit includes specialist positions in various areas such as budget, data processing, etc. The administrative unit chief has considerable authority to complete personnel actions, obligate funds, make purchases, etc.

The second broad type is the administrative officer position in an operating sub-division of an organization which receives services from central servicing offices such as personnel, procurement and administrative offices having substantial authority to complete action in some administrative matters. This second type administrative officer usually has few or no personnel specialists, management analysts, procurement agents, etc., and limited authority in personnel and procurement matters; however, he (like the first type) may be engaged in any of the illustrative duties described above.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER JOBS AND RELATED KINDS OF WORK

(Only key distinguishing points are discussed)

Administrative officers may perform work in the fields of management analysis, financial management, office services management and program analysis. However, when work in any of these fields appears in an administrative officer's position, it is but a part of his overall job and not the primary concern, as is the case in the more specialized positions described below:

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Management analysis

These positions are primarily concerned with the solution of management problems through studies that involve consideration and development of changes in managerial policies, practices, methods, procedures, and/or organizational structures. Management analysts are not usually responsible for the immediate handling and solution of a variety and number of day-to-day practical management problems.

Financial management

Financial management positions are concerned primarily with the financial affairs of an organization (including at least the functions of budgeting, accounting, and managerial-financial reporting). Financial managers may also have responsibilities for other management services such as management analysis, records management, auditing, statistics, and data processing systems. The primary qualification requirement, however, is knowledge and ability in the field of financial management.

Office services management

Office services management positions do not normally include responsibilities for providing or obtaining management services such as personnel management, funds management, and management analysis. These management services are typically found in administrative officer positions.

Program analysis

Program analysis positions are primarily concerned with analyzing operating programs to evaluate their effectiveness in achieving an organization's objectives. The factfinding and analysis in program analysis jobs may involve a review of the supporting services provided to management, but these jobs do not typically include responsibility for providing these supporting services.

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TITLE

*The title for trainee or developmental jobs is *Administrative Assistant*.

The title *Administrative Officer* is established for all nontrainee positions in this series. This title is applicable to both supervisory and nonsupervisory positions in the series. Basic requirements of these positions include general management skills, a knowledge of human relations, and the ability to motivate others. The title Administrative Officer reflects the essential character of all these positions, supervisory and nonsupervisory alike. This is an exception to the general rules set forth in the introductory material to the standards on pages 39 and 40. The presence or absence of supervisory qualification requirements can be documented in the position description and spotlighted for attention in the selection process.*

GRADE EVALUATION

Notwithstanding their common elements, administrative officer positions differ greatly in their makeup and nature. There are substantial variations in the mix or kinds of management assistance functions or services present, and in the significance of any of the functions in a job. Also, there are great variations in the environment in which the positions operate (i.e., in the kind of organization, program, management level and other factors involved). Because of this very heterogeneous nature of positions classifiable in this series, it is not feasible to prepare definitive and comprehensive grade-level criteria for such positions.

The following standards may be appropriate, depending upon a position's content and its environment, in evaluating major aspects of administrative officer positions: the [Financial Management Series, GS-505](#); the [Personnel Management Series, GS-201](#); the [Management Analysis Series, GS-343](#); the [Budget Administration Series, GS-560](#); Part II of the [GS Supervisory Guide](#); and such other standards for other kinds of work related to major duties or functions. Such standards together with sound classification principles are to be used in making a total assessment of administrative officer positions.